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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. Night operations by Soviet tank units are seldom employed inasmuch as a tank's mobility is necessarily limited by darkness. Only when prior reconnaissance has been made, specific targets or areas selected for tank fire have been designated, and when the "tankers card" has been adequately constructed, can tanks be effectively employed in night operations. This does not mean however, that tanks do not move at night. Movement into attack positions is normally accomplished at night. When tanks are employed at night, they will commonly be used for harassing raids accompanied by infantry and will return to their point of departure rather than try to hold any terrain captured during these raids. Tanks are normally guided into the objective areas by tracers, flares, and smoke from the accompanying infantry. When no previous targets have been selected for tank fire, indiscriminate firing is undertaken and the greatest amount of emphasis is placed on this subject during basic or small unit training periods. There are certain phases of training however, which are carried out at night and larger units do place some stress on night training in advanced phases of training. As an example, a tank division in the Soviet occupied zone of Germany during the months of February, March and April 1951, spent one week per month during which the entire training program was carried out at night. This meant that reconnaissance and patrolling, staff work, map reading, compass courses and so forth, all of which normally would be carried out during the hours of daylight were accomplished during the hours of darkness. Time allotted for rest and sleep was during the daytime. The general opinion held by the Soviets concerning night operations and training is that they are essential parts of any training program and individuals must become proficient in movement at night in order that resupplying, receipt of replacements, staff planning etc, can be carried out during the hours of darkness when a unit is less susceptible to artillery and air strikes. 50X1

2. In winter operations, occurring during weather below minus 30°F, there are special facilities for holding tanks in readiness so that it is not necessary to spend two to three hours warming tanks up in preparation for combat action. Tanks are normally held in rear assembly areas, "tank parks", some ten kilometers to the rear of the front lines. Each tank is provided

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with an individual heating unit, of the tent type. Where possible, tanks are committed only in populated areas and are kept to the roads. This has several advantages. First, there is less chance of the tank bogging down; second, there is shelter into which tanks can be put to accomplish maintenance and resupply, and third, the snow will, in all probability, not be so deep in these areas. The cold in itself is no hindrance to the employment of armor and in such cases, skids of a ski type are attached to the sides of the tank to prevent its sinking into the snow and becoming "bellied up". Tanks are not normally committed in deep snow. However, approach marches may be accomplished through deep snow in order to commit tanks to action where the ground or snow are frozen hard enough to support the weight of a tank.

3. Operations in marshy areas by Soviet tank units are avoided if possible and all reasonable precautions are taken in the planning of an action to avoid the committment of armor in swampy or marshy areas. However, the element of surprise is often considered and tanks are put through difficult terrain to catch the enemy offguard. In order to commit tanks in difficult terrain, engineers are commonly attached or are placed in support of armored units. These engineers are from the division engineer battalion and are primarily responsible for providing routes of travel for tank units. Maximum usage is made of field expedients using the pioneer tools found on tanks themselves. As an example, the tank crews themselves are expected to build their own corduroy roads. At the company or battalion level there are no tools, jacks or construction materials with which to expedite the movement of tanks over difficult terrain. Even at regimental level the only assistance available is in the form of four tank recovery vehicles to assist tanks that may be bogged down.

4. River crossings do not pose any serious problems as Soviet tank and mechanized divisions have, organic to their engineer battalions, enough bridging equipment to span a river of up to 150 meters. For crossing rivers any wider than 150 meters the equipment organic to the division is supplemented by attachments of personnel and equipment from an Army engineer brigade. This bridging is accomplished with ponton bridges. If no pontons are available, the infantry swims across or fords are made to establish a bridgehead. Cables are brought across and ferries are constructed from material locally available. Collapsible ferries which have a ten-ton capacity are organic equipment in the Engineer Battalion. Larger ferries of the commercial type must be furnished by army headquarters. The bridging equipment available in both the tank and mechanized divisions is considered adequate for T-34 and JS-3 tanks, particularly the ponton bridges. If the bridge is to be used for some time, a "capital" bridge is constructed by the Army engineer brigade. This type bridge is intended for a railroad load. In some cases even pontons have been used to support a railroad. The bridge across the Dnepr in World War II is a good example. Training in river crossings occupies a fair share of the training program. As an example, a tank division in Soviet occupied Germany at the completion of each summer's training, practices crossing the Elbe River on its return to its permanent garrison with just the equipment available within the division.

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